

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PGOV, GR
SUBJECT: SIGN OF THE TIMES: DIRECTIVE THAT THE BUREAUCRACY
SIMPLIFY ITS WRITTEN LANGUAGE

REF: ATHENS 3407

1. IN AN ATTEMPT TO INTRODUCE A BIT OF MODERNIZATION AND SOME RESPONSIVENESS INTO THE GREEK BUREAUCRACY, MINISTER TO THE PRESIDENCY OF THE GOVERNMENT, GEORGE RALLIS, HAS SIGNED A CIRCULAR DIRECTING THAT THE CIVIL SERVICE AS WELL AS ALL PUBLIC AND MUNICIPAL ORGANIZATIONS SIMPLIFY THE ARCHAIC AND STILTED LANGUAGE PRESENTLY EMPLOYED IN THEIR DOCUMENTS AND COMMUNICATIONS. THIS CHANGE, APPROVED BY PRIME MINISTER CARAMANLIS, IS TO BEGIN FEBRUARY 1, 1977, BUT IS LIKELY TO TAKE A GENERATION, IF NOT LONGER, TO BECOME EFFECTIVE.

2. THE ELIMINATION OF THE COMPLICATED--AND TOO MANY IN-COMPREHENSIBLE--SYNTAX OF OFFICIALDOM WOULD INDEED BE A RADICAL REFORM. THE RATIONALE IS THAT IT WILL BRING THE BUREAUCRACY CLOSER TO THE PEOPLE, ESPECIALLY TO THOSE NOT SO WELL VERSED IN THE FORMAL LANGUAGE "KATHAREVOUSA." HOWEVER, THERE IS BOUND TO BE STRONG RESISTANCE FROM THE BUREAUCRATS ENTRENCHED IN THEIR TRADITIONS. THE BETTER EDUCATED, PROUD OF THEIR "SUPERIOR" STATUS AND PERHAPS ALSO RELUCTANT TO UNDERTAKE THE PERSONAL EDUCATIONAL EFFORT REQUIRED TO ORIENT THEMSELVES IN THE PREPARATION
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AND USAGE OF A SIMPLER FORM OF WRITTEN COMMUNICATION, WILL ALSO BE A PROBLEM AREA, NOT TO MENTION THE CONSERVATIVE SECTORS OF GREEK SOCIETY FOR WHOM KATHAREVOUSA HAS LONG BEEN A POLITICAL SYMBOL. RECOGNIZING THE INHERENT DIFFICULTIES AND THE IMBEDDED PREJUDICES OF THE BUREAUCRATS AND OTHERS, THE CIRCULAR SPEAKS OF A TRANSITIONAL PERIOD OF "ONE OR TWO YEARS" BEFORE

STRICT COMPLIANCE IS EXPECTED. IN FACT, IT MAY WELL BE SEVERAL
DECADES, IF NOT LONGER, UNTIL A NEW GENERATION NOW BEING TAUGHT
UNDER THE NEW EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM USING DEMOTIKI, THE COMMON
USAGE GREEK (REFTEL), RISES TO FILL THE RANKS OF THE
INCUMBENT BUREAUCRATS.
KUBISCH

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